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FROM US MISSION TO THE UN AGENCIES IN ROME

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SUBJECT: WFP SECURITY COST SURGE BEGS CENTRAL UN FUNDING

REF: ROME 3949

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED PLEASE HANDLE
ACCORDINGLY

1. SUMMARY. The World Food Program (WFP) has briefed USUN Rome on security activities being taken in the field to ensure that food aid is not disrupted. Those activities include augmenting field security staff and equipment, providing country security assessments, and coordinating closely with the United Nation's new Department of Safety and Security Services (UNDSS) in New York and in the field. Despite taking prudent security measures with UNDSS, WFP occasionally experiences disruptions in food aid operations due to security considerations. The UN General Assembly's failure in December 2004 to approve central funding for UNDSS out of regular program funds is negatively impacting WFP's budget, thus reducing its capacity as an efficient humanitarian assistance provider. WFP assessed security payments to the UN have almost tripled over the past 5 years to an estimated \$23 million for 2006/07. The UN should be encouraged to reexamine the question of central funding for UN security costs. END SUMMARY.

2. WFP security personnel have briefed USUN Rome on the security measures WFP is taking in the field to complement the fieldwork provided by the Office of the UN Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) successor, the Department of Safety and Security Services (UNDSS), established in December 2004. These briefings began following recent USG reports, substantiated by WFP, that UNDSS is not yet able to deploy enough personnel to assess and provide timely clearances for dangerous areas before UN operations can begin. Other UN agencies including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Health Organization (WHO), and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) also have had to obtain their own security resources to conduct these activities.

3. Given its mandate to provide humanitarian assistance around the globe and consistent with plans approved by its Executive Board, WFP in recent years has enhanced its security capability in accordance with operational requirements and other existing UN resources in an attempt to avoid a diminution or delay in the delivery of food aid. See ref tel for details.

4. WFP provides field level security for more than 8,000 field staff and over \$2 billion in food commodities and employs 54 security professionals, including a headquarters staff of 4. Its security measures are closely coordinated with and approved by UNDSS in New York. Other UN organizations, principally the UNHCR, UN Development Program (UNDP), WHO, UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and UNICEF, also coordinate with UNDSS regarding their own measures to obtain resources for conducting assessments and clearing areas where humanitarian assistance is required.

5. The UN's increased recognition of the importance of security, coupled with General Assembly's failure in December 2004 to approve central funding for UNDSS out of its regular budget, are negatively impacting WFP's budget, thus reducing its capacity as an efficient humanitarian assistance provider. At the same time that WFP's total investment in the security and safety of its own staff around the world has more than doubled (from \$31 million in 2002/3 to \$64 million in 2004/5), its allocated UNDSS assessment for field related security costs has also grown dramatically, from \$6.5 million for 2002/03,

to \$13.2 million for 2004/05, and an estimated \$22.6 for 2006/07, which could rise to as high as \$24 million thereafter.

16. Given these high security costs, WFP is conferring closely about the nature of the assessed costs invoiced by UNDSS, particularly UNDSS headquarters costs. With regard to field security,

UNDSS allocates costs to UN agencies on a headcount basis. Because UNDSS security staff work mostly in capital cities and WFP's workforce is outside capital cities, WFP is not benefited to the degree other UN agencies are from the presence of UNDSS security forces. Finally, WFP and UNDSS are discussing other UNDSS improvements, including greater decentralization.

17. Comment: From our point of view, the question of central funding for UN security costs should be reexamined. While the UNDSS is being reinforced considerably, security costs are still based on minimum requirements that exclude much-needed funds for security-related IT development, emergency medical response capability, and security data analysis. Central funding appears to be an equitable solution for such needs. The current system unfortunately requires that some donor contributions intended for food be redirected by WFP to cover security costs, which means that less of each dollar given actually makes it to the intended beneficiaries.

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